

## For More Information

### On the Internet

National Immunization Program's Registry website:  
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# IMMUNIZATION REGISTRIES



## Helping Children Stay Healthy

### A Guide for Health Care Providers

## What Is An Immunization Registry?

An immunization registry is a computerized information system that contains immunization information on children in your practice and children in your community. When used in your practice, an immunization registry is able to tell you when a child needs a vaccine at a visit, and lets you know when a child is late for a vaccine. It can also help you monitor suspected vaccine side effects.

### A Busy Practice, A Complicated Immunization Schedule, New Patients, Paper, Paper, Paper . . .

#### How Can a Registry Help?

##### ■ How many places are immunizations documented in your office?

Save your nursing staff time, enter the shot to the immunization registry once. When developed properly, an immunization registry can talk directly to your billing system. As a result, you do not duplicate an existing system or need to enter the same data twice. A registry can improve both the efficiency and value of your existing computerized record keeping system.

##### ■ The immunization schedule changes every year!

An immunization registry will tell you what vaccines are due according to the latest recommendations. An immunization registry means you don't need to spend time counting doses or months.

You can visit the  
Immunization Registry  
Clearinghouse's website at  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/registry>.

## How You Can Help Pull the Pieces Together:

As a health care provider, you are being asked to support efforts to build local- and state-based registries that contain immunization histories on children.

Families, health care providers, and communities need, and want, documentation of childhood immunizations. Immunization registries can provide a solution.

Because nearly 70% of children receive their immunizations in private physicians' offices, the full participation of physicians in private practice is essential to making immunization registries work. NIP needs your help to pull the pieces together and meet the goal of developing and implementing community- and state-based immunization registries.



## The Immunization Registry Support Team

The National Immunization Program is committed to promoting the development and maintenance of computerized registries as a primary data resource to provide the information needed to improve and sustain high levels of immunization coverage for states and communities.



The Immunization Registry Support Team is a key component of the CDC's strategy to promote immunization registry development. The Registry Support Team is staffed by a team of CDC experts dedicated to collecting and disseminating up-to-date information between registry partners.

The Support Team promotes the development of immunization registries in many ways, including:

- **Gathering wide-ranging information on immunization registry development and implementation;**
- **Sharing immunization registry strategies that work;**
- **Fostering communication and data sharing between local and state immunization registries;**
- **Identifying immunization registries as a priority in state and local immunization coalitions;**
- **Encourage registry software development for the accurately assessing and recording immunization histories, consolidating duplicate records, and communicating data; and**
- **Promoting the use of immunization registry information for action through reminder/recall functions, coverage assessments, and provider evaluations.**

### ■ **Save time obtaining shot records.**

How many times does your staff have to call the previous provider to get old records? Access the immunization registry directly and print out a complete immunization record for your new patients.

### ■ **It's September—who needs a shot?**

Whether it's for soccer camp, football or a new daycare, parents often lose the immunization record you give them. Save time reviewing medical records or rewriting an immunization record; look it up in the registry and print it out for parents or to meet school entry requirements.

### ■ **When was the last time you could take a look at all of the children in your practice and immediately summarize their immunization status?**

Improve immunization practices in your office and eliminate missed opportunities by assessing immunization coverage rates with the push of a button and customized reports.

### ■ **Reminder/Recall?**

Automatically print reminder/recall letters or postcards. Use customized print functions to identify all of the kids who are due for a shot or all of the kids who are late for a shot and send them a note.

Computerized systems have been around for a while. Many health care providers, health maintenance organizations, and insurance companies have developed systems that track visits and immunization information for billing purposes. These systems cannot function as immunization registries alone. An immunization registry is designed to ensure that children get the vaccinations they need when they are recommended. An immunization registry streamlines the job of providing immunizations in your practice.



## Benefits For You

Immunization registries are extremely useful for helping you to achieve the highest immunization coverage of your patients. Moreover, local information sharing in your community will make it easier for you and parents to check on a child's immunization status. Immunization registries can also be used to enhance adult immunization services and coverage.

An immunization registry can benefit you in many ways, including enhancing your ability to:

- Immediately determine a patient's immunization status and assess their immunization needs at the time of a visit;
- Access a complete immunization record that has been consolidated from multiple providers;
- Give you immediate access to the overall level of immunization coverage in your practice as well as your community;
- Automate recall and reminder mailings to parents of children who need immunizations;
- Provide a complete immunization history to fulfill school, camp, and day care immunization record requirements;
- Reduce your practice's paperwork;
- Facilitate introduction of new vaccines or changes in the vaccine schedule;
- Accurately manage vaccine inventories;
- Accurately track suspected vaccine side effects; and
- Generate HEDIS reports for managed care organizations.

## The Need for Immunization Registries

Every year, 4 million babies are born in the United States. Today's immunization schedule has grown more complex with the addition of new vaccines. We're now able to protect children from disease, but it requires 18–22 shots by 6 years of age. This can make it difficult for you and for parents to keep track of what immunizations are due and when.

Although the United States has record high immunization levels and a record low incidence of most vaccine-preventable diseases, almost a million children under age 2 are missing one or more doses of at least one series of vaccine. Maintaining high immunization rates is a continuing challenge that is threatened by several factors, including:

- Health care providers and state and community public health agencies do not have a consistent method for accurately assessing the immunization status of their populations;
- Providers frequently overestimate the immunization status of their patients;
- Parents often do not know the immunization status of their children and often change health care providers in our mobile society;
- Most providers do not have systems to automatically remind parents when immunizations are due or missed;
- Missed opportunities for immunization are common; and
- Disease levels are at record lows and thus do not provide a visible reminder to patients and providers of the need for immunization.

